

Wyoming SOAR Network

State of Wyoming

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June 2013



Stepping Stones to Recovery

SSI/SSDI Outreach, Access and Recovery

Using the SOAR Process

The SOAR process **CAN BE** used on any individual who is eligible to apply for Social Security Disability benefits. An individual does not need to be homeless nor have a mental illness to qualify for SOAR. Initially, SOAR was designed for assisting individuals who were homeless with mental illness and/or co-occurring disorders. We know how successful it can be using the SOAR process, therefore; it should be used on any client your agency serves. When the application is submitted to SSA, you will not designate it as a SOAR application, unless the person meets SSA's definition of Homeless. You should still send a SOAR Data Form to Jessica Fancher indicating you have used the SOAR process. *Remember....you are not using the SOAR process if you are not writing a medical summary report and ordering the medical records.*

SSA's Definition of Homeless

<u>SSA POMS MANUAL, SI 00835.060</u> Transients, Homeless Individuals, and LA/ISM Determinations

A transient is an individual with no permanent living arrangement, i.e., no fixed place of residence. A transient is neither a member of a household nor a resident of an institution.

EXAMPLES: A transient can be:

- a homeless individual (i.e., someone who sleeps in doorways, overnight shelters, parks, bus stations, etc.); or
- a person who stays with a succession of friends or relatives and has no permanent living arrangement on the first moment of the month.

Update: Data Tracking System (OAT)

We were working with Mathematica and Policy Research, and Associates to get the new tracking system up and running. Unfortunately, there were concerns of identifying information being available in this system; therefore, we will continue using the SOAR Data Form to track our progress here in Wyoming. A database will be maintained at the state level and the only information that will be submitted to Mathematica will be the raw data. This will include the percentages of veterans, gender, housing status, days to decision, and approval numbers. Please continue to fax your SOAR Data Forms to 307-777-5580 each time you submit an application using the SOAR process.

Wyoming's SOAR Data Report

In FY 2012-2013, 89 applications have been submitted so far using the SOAR process. 43 have been approved with 31 still pending a decision. Wyoming's average approval time is at 95 days with a 77% approval rate. Great job Wyoming!

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2013 SOAR Trainings:

Future Trainings —

Cody, August 12, 13, & 14

Casper, Sept 10, 11, & 12

Email Jessica to request the registration form

Consider...

sending your medical summary report to Jessica if you want a quality review completed.



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Wyoming SOAR Network

Upcoming Trainings Cody—8/12, 8/13 & 8/14

August					2013	
Su	М	Tu	w	Th	F	Sa
				I	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
П	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

In this issue and future issues we would like to thank individuals for their dedication and support of the SOAR process.

Recognition of Outstanding Support

DDS Support

A big thank you to all of the DDS staff and disability examiners for being patient and helpful as we continue to implement the SOAR process in the great state of Wyoming. Thank you to Jeff Graham for his outstanding professionalism and willingness to help as well as keeping us in the loop. You are a wonderful asset!



Case Managers

An awesome job and big thank you to those case managers who are using the SOAR process **AND** sending in the data forms.

You are doing a fantastic job!

- Theresa Bush
- Shelley Gibson
- Jillian Gallenberg
- Claude Alley
- Tammy Gamino
- Diane Marshall
- Kirk Parry
- Tina Snyder
- Kristin Olaveson



Compassionate Allowances Update



SSA has reached 200 conditions that are considered Compassionate Allowances (CAL) claims. Be sure to check this list on a monthly basis and identify the CAL condition on the application if criteria is met to ensure a quick decision.

www.ssa.gov/compassionateallowances/conditions.htm



Today I am going

to be amazing,

along with every

day hereafter un-

less I change my

mind. —Unknown

IF YOU CAN
FIND A PATH
WITH NO OBSTACLES
IT PROBABLY
DOESN'T
LEAD ANYWHERE

Quote for the Month: (Send us your favorite quote)

"The greatest good you can do for another is not just share your riches, but reveal to them their own." - Benjamin Disraeli







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Technical Assistance



The contract for the Statewide SOAR Program Coordinator, Jessica Fancher has been renewed until June 30, 2014. Use this resource while we have it. Jessica can provide you with any assistance you need while navigating the disability application process using SOAR. She is able to provide you technical assistance, review of medical summary reports and/or applications, forms assistance, etc. Please contact Jessica for any of your SOAR needs at 307-777-5698.

Interesting Facts

- Mental illnesses are more common than cancer, diabetes, or heart disease. http://www.dosomething.org
- The national rate of homelessness was 20 homeless people per 10,000 people in the general population and 29 homeless Veterans per 10,000 Veterans in the general population. http://www.endhomelessness.org
- Every person has a unique tongue print as well as fingerprints. http://bootstrike.com/

DDS Update

By: Jeff Graham, Deputy Administrator, Disability Determination Services

The Wyoming Disability Determination Services (DDS) has faced several challenges during federal fiscal year 2013 in which it has experienced attrition and due to budget constraints has not been able to fill vacant positions. Due to these events, the Wyoming DDS experienced a backlog of initial claims, which prevented the DDS from adjudicating in a timely manner. The Wyoming DDS has been receiving assistance from a federal component of the Social Security Administration with its adult initial claims. As a result of this federal assistance, the Wyoming DDS has significantly lowered its initial claims backlog. At the same time, the Wyoming DDS has been able to reduce its overall processing time and reduce individual caseloads for each Disability Examiner. The Wyoming DDS has adjudicated a total of 2,150 initial claims from October 1, 2012 to present.



Don't Forget....

- Flag applications for applicants who are homeless (by SSA's definition)
- Identify the application as a SOAR application on the SSA-1696
- Complete the SOAR Data Form once an application has been submitted and send it via email to jessica.fancher1@wyo.gov or via fax to (307) 777-5580

Access to Assets



Sharing tips and tools with your clients. What is self determination? Banking, home ownership, tax program assistance, budget planning, and more. A training coming near you soon.

Mango, Black Bean, and Couscous Salad

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup whole wheat couscous
- 2 tsp. olive oil
- 1 can black beans, drained
- 1 ripe mango, chopped small cubes
- 2 tbsp. fresh chives or green onions, chopped
- 1/3 cup of fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 jalapeno, minced
- 1/2 tsp ground cumin, garlic, ground pepper, and salt

Cook couscous according to box directions, add olive oil to prevent from clumping. Mix all other ingredients in bowl. Add couscous and mix. Additional olive oil can be added as needed to prevent couscous from sticking. Chill and serve. 1 cup=1 serving = 220 calories, 3 grams fat, 8 grams fiber, 9 grams sugar, 8 grams protein, 40 grams carbohydrates



New SSA Ruling on Substance Use and Disability

This Social Security Ruling (SSR) rescinds and replaces <u>SSR 82-60</u>: "Titles II and XVI: Evaluation of Drug Addiction and Alcoholism."

<u>PURPOSE</u>: This SSR explains our policies for how we consider whether "drug addiction and alcoholism" (DAA) is a contributing factor material to our determination of disability in disability claims and continuing disability reviews. http://ssa.gov/OP Home/rulings/di/01/SSR2013-02-di-01.html

The key factor...SSA will determine whether drug addiction or alcoholism is a contributing factor material to the determination of disability is whether we would still find a claimant disabled if he or she stopped using drugs or alcohol.

- a. DAA is not material to the determination that the claimant is under a disability if the claimant would still meet our definition of disability if he or she were not using drugs or alcohol. If DAA is not material, we find that the claimant is disabled.
- b. DAA is material to the determination of disability if the claimant would not meet our definition of disability if he or she were not using drugs or alcohol. If DAA is material, we find that the claimant is not disabled.

This will be done through a 6 step evaluation process asking the following questions:

- Does the claimant have DAA?
- 2. Is the claimant disable consider all impairments, including DAA?
- 3. Is DAA the only impairment?
- 4. Is the other impairment(s) disabling by itself while the claimant is dependent upon or abusing drugs or alcohol?
- 5. Does the DAA cause or affect the claimant's medically determinable impairment(s)?
- 6. Would the other impairment(s) improve to the point of non-disability in the absences of DAA?

A person can be denied at steps 2, 3, 4, & 6 during this evaluation process. It is important for case managers to clearly describe alcohol use in the summary report. Understanding this evaluation can help better describe the individuals condition and it's impact on his/her life without substance use. Remember the question of materiality, "If the person was clean and sober, would he/she still have a disabling condition that meets the listing requirements?" This must be clearly demonstrated in the medical record and the medical summary report. Be sure to discuss the person's functional impairment even during times of sobriety.

Conference Call Follow-Up June 14, 2013

Jeff Graham, Deputy Administrator provided updates on DDS and its process. He advised case managers to contact him directly if they are unable to get in contact with the disability examiner assigned to the case.

- Discussion on the objectiveness of consultative examinations covered what the provider looks at. Jeff stated that DDS
 asks the CE provider to look at objective medical evidence as it relates to function. Jeff asked that if the claimant has a
 concern on how the CE went, i.e. not enough time spent, or provider seems jaded, the claimant should contact DDS to
 report their concerns.
- The DDS tries to maintain a delicate balance between processing time and quality in order to prevent or lower attrition. DDS's goal is to provide excellent customer service.
- A full caseload for a disability examiner is 110-140 cases at one time.
- Clarification was made on case managers submitting applications under SOAR, but not completing medical summary
 reports or collecting medical records. If a medical summary report is not completed or records not collected by the
 case manager, it will not be considered as using the SOAR process and any SOAR data forms sent in will be shredded and a phone call placed to the case manager to advise.
- Several case managers expressed concerns that their local SSA reps were informing them they would not accept
 medical records, that DDS will collect the records. When using the SOAR process, the case manager should be
 collecting all medical records and turning them into to DDS. Jeff stated that the DDS would take the records and scan
 them in.
- SOAR mini-trainings coming soon....topic requested....Medical Summary Reports.... Stay tuned